



PRESS RELEASE

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Study Shows Great Benefits of Mobile Technology for Afghan Women

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | MAY 22 – Some 80 percent of Afghan women have regular or occasional access to mobile phones, according to a survey conducted in late 2012. Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and based on the research methodology of GSMA mWomen Program, the survey shows a remarkable speed of mobile phone adoption among Afghan women since the first mobile phone license was issued in the country in 2002. In addition, 82 percent of those surveyed believe mobile phones improve Afghan women's lives.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) hosted a conference today in Kabul celebrating women's benefits from recent technological innovation in the Afghan mobile market. The conference featured presentations on mobile technology programs specifically designed for women, such as a distance-learning literacy program, a family hotline facility, an SMS service for teachers and students to fast-track their progress in education, and mobile health applications during pregnancy. More than 200 women participated, along with representatives from mobile companies, the international donor community, and Afghan and the U.S. Government officials.

"There are many mobile solutions to common problems Afghan women face. Mobile technology empowers women and provides more access to important information," – said MoWA Minister Husn Banu Ghazanfar in her opening speech.

Echoing Minister Ghazanfar's remarks, MCIT Minister Amirzai Sangin emphasized amazing advances in mobile technology this last decade in Afghanistan.

"Today, 88 percent of the population lives within the combined network coverage of the four largest mobile operators: AWCC, Etisalat, MTN and Roshan," said Minister Sangin.

U.S. Embassy Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs Ambassador Hilda Arellano highlighted the important role the Afghan Government's regulatory framework plays in the increase of women's access to mobile technology, and urged all conference participants to go further.

"Mobile technology is a powerful tool for progress and development. If used correctly, it can give a voice to the voiceless, vastly expand access to information and education, and lead economic innovation," said Ambassador Arellano.

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